

A LOOK BEHIND THE SCENES AT **AMIGA FORMAT**

Backstage

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER - FOR SUBSCRIBERS

The staff they are a changin'



No sooner does Steve Jarratt take the helm than Rob Mead and Richard Baguley abandon the Good Ship Format.

Welcome once again to *Backstage* - your personal guide to the behind-the-scenes activities of *Amiga Format*.

It's been all change again this month - no sooner do I assume command, than I have two mutineers on my hands. Richard Baguley has been appointed editor of *AF's* sister mag, *Amiga Shopper*, and Rob Mead, *AF's* sultry games ed, has jumped ship completely to work on - get this - *Practical Caravan*. Not *Practical Amiga User's Caravan* or *Amiga Owners Go Caravaning Monthly* or even *Caravans-With-Amigas-In-Them Action*. Takes all sorts... Still, our best wishes go with them both.

But what of the empty desks sitting forlornly in the *Amiga Format* office, I hear you cry. Fear not, for their replacements are already well under way. Baggers' seat has been filled by the prodigal tech-head Jason Holborn. Jason was with *Amiga Format* from launch to issue 11, at which point he and *AF*

parted company so he could pursue a freelance career. But after years of flitting from job to job, writing for all and sundry, he has once again sought the solace of a busy office, steady income and on-site coffee preparation facilities. Jason will be helping Nick Veitch maintain and improve *AF's* already superb Seriously Amiga section.

Rob's replacement has yet to be finalised, but we've been inundated with enquiries and I'm sure we'll find someone to carry on his excellent work in Screen Play.

Sick of sitting on my own in the corridor, I persuaded the team to rearrange the *AF* offices. *Amiga Shopper* have been summarily booted out, giving us all enough room to swing several cats all tied together.

I've now taken prime position in the corner, surrounded by my generals (Jules and Nick) and am the lord of all I survey. Perhaps I'll even turn my desk around so I can see the rest of the office...

Sadly, this also means that I'm now well within earshot of the *AF* ghetto-blasters, which lives on a constant diet of truly dreadful music, including Stephen Bradley's extensive collection of Gilbert O'Sullivan hits. I've already written to the Samaritans and Amnesty International.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF ▶

ISSUE SIXTY-ONE
JULY '94

What I do!



**Richard Jones -
Production
Editor**

Richard Jones takes you through the seamless process that takes *AF* from the drawing board, around the office a few times and to the printers...

A magazine Production Editor is the dynamic organiser and motivator at the hub of the team, or at least that's what it says in the job description.

In practice being a Prod Ed means nagging writers and artists to get on with their work and listening wearily to their pathetic excuses when they don't. The next stage in the process involves being nagged by the production department to get the pages out and making pathetic excuses to them about why they're late.

Actually the nagging and pathetic excuses only really start in deadline week, the rest of the time we're just one big happy family. Here's how we amuse ourselves over the four week production lifespan of a typical issue of *Amiga Format*.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF ▶

Read all about it!

Special limited offer for Amiga Format subscribers. Order your half-price copy of *Get The Most Out Of Your Amiga 1993* NOW!

Get The Most Out Of Your Amiga 1993 is the essential guide to understanding and getting the most out of your machine. Discover the Amiga's history, get to grips with Workbench, find out about hard disks, RAM, floppy disk drives and accelerators, and learn useful *AmigaDOS* commands. Plus two disks of top Amiga utilities, all for just £9.95!



**Special
half-price offer
£9.95**

Week One: Clear up the debris left over from deadline week. Because almost every bit of paper necessary for the ruthlessly efficient running of *AF* lands on my desk at some point, this can take some time.

Take care not to look too closely at old page proofs in case I notice a mistake. Discover Frank Bartucca's glasses underneath pizza box. Wonder where the rest of him is. Draw up copy deadlines for the team. Give Stephen Bradley a withering look when he snorts with derision at his Demo Zone deadline.

Hold meeting about flatplan theme. The flatplan is the plan of all the magazine pages, and undergoes about 15 changes during the issue. Instead of just numbering them 1-15 we have an alphabetical theme. This month it's Rob Mead's turn to choose (because he's leaving) and he (rather sadly) decides on Jazz Butcher record titles.

Sort out various admin things, phone freelancers and commission a couple of pages. Review a peculiar French pinball game. Begin flatplanning. Decide this would be a good time to give up smoking.

Week Two: Sub raw text and pass it over to art. Start looking at the finished Quark XPress pages and start to make noises about having to get 20 pages ready by the end of the week. Revise flatplan because Nick Veitch has changes.

Week Three: Start talking wistfully about something called copy flow, an interesting concept whereby there's a steady flow of copy from the writers to me, from me to the artists and from the artists back to me and on to Steve Jarratt. I explain to anybody who will listen that a good copy flow system would have a similar impact on the quality of our lives as the Welfare State did in Post War Britain. Writers look at me with pity and the sensitive art people seem nervous. Revise flatplan because Nick Veitch has changes.

Week Four: If I was a smug person I would feel, err, smug. For the last week I've been telling everyone that unless we get another 20 pages ready for the printers by Monday, the magazine could go late. On Monday I am greeted by lots of people running around saying that unless we get 20 pages ready for the printers today, the magazine could go late. This is deadline week, a time of frayed tempers and jangled nerves. We often work till 10pm or later a couple of nights a week to get the mag to the printers on time. If we don't we could miss our print slot and go on sale late, which is not the object of the exercise for a Production Editor. The paper and pizza boxes begin to pile high on my desk and it all seems vaguely familiar.

A reader writes...

Dear Backstage,

I've been a subscriber to your excellent magazine since you offered the extra disk as an incentive to subscribe. This certainly worked for me and I enjoy *AF* even more now that I have the disk and *Backstage*.

But here are my suggestions to make *Backstage* even better. First, the disk. I believe the disk should cover the widest range of areas possible. At the moment you are catering for games player, graphics, word processing and DTP (fonts), but you haven't put anything on the disks which is to do with music.

I would also like to see more pictures and brushes for graphics. You seem to be sticking with utilities on the Subscribers' Superdisks which is very good, but I would like to see more actual work such as the module and pictures. The fonts you put on are great and I would like to see them continue.

I think it would be a good idea to let subscribers send in their work on a disk so you could choose the best ones and put them on the Subscribers' disk. I know there is a limited amount of space, but I think you should try to put more varied programs on the disks, this especially goes for music modules and players.

Next there is *Backstage*, which again is very good, but could do with some improvements.

First I would like to see parts which have been written by subscribers. This could be a review of the latest piece of software or hardware, a letter talking about the Amiga or anything else which is relevant in an Amiga magazine.

You could choose the most interesting letter each month and publish it in *Backstage*. Try to involve your readers as much as possible because then the Subscribers' Superdisk and *Backstage* will be even more enjoyable.

M Kelley, Dorset

I've passed your thoughts on to Jason Holborn who will be collating the disk each issue - I'm sure we can find some music players for the disk. I'd also like to see things that *AF* readers have produced using the utilities we've given away with the Coverdisks - such as ProVector drawings, Music-X compositions,

InterBase files or Imagine models - if you've done something to be proud of, why not share it with other *Backstage* readers? You never know, I may even give away some limited edition, hand-crafted AFT-shirts (or failing that, some of the other junk in the office).

Similarly, *Backstage* is an open forum for your letters, complaints, reviews or suggestions. Just make sure you label your envelope *Backstage*, or it'll go into the bottomless pile of Amiga Format mail.

To get the ball rolling, here are a few topics of interest I'd like to hear about: what do you think of *AF*'s Coverdisks? What are your favourites? What sort of special offers do you want to see in *Backstage*? What sort of thing would you like to read about in *Backstage*?

Right. I'm waiting...

Write to Backstage

If there's anything you would like to see in *Backstage* or Amiga Format, write to: *Backstage*, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

Pleasance remains positive

I was down at Commodore's UK headquarters the other day to talk about the up-and-coming European World Of Amiga show, which is to be held at Wembley Exhibition Centre, in November. However, of more immediate interest was how Commodore themselves are faring giving the shock news of their impending purchase (see News, *AF*60).

No loyal Amiga user could ignore the news, and I've no doubt many are worried about the repercussions the takeover will have. Well, David Pleasance and the other guys at Commodore were certainly very positive about everything; as far as they're concerned it will be business as usual. They have many plans for the future - including developing the CD1200 and AAA RISC machine, and I'm confident that with an injection of cash we can see the Amiga become a major force in the home computer market again. Just thought you'd like to know...

Subscribers' special book offer

Please send me a copy of *Get The Most Out Of Your Amiga 1993* at the special subscribers'-only price of £9.95 - a saving of £10.

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Subscriber Superdisk

Issue 61 • July 1994

Richard Baguley scours the Public Domain to bring you a selection of the best games and utilities.

GETTING STARTED

This disk is not bootable, so to access the programs, boot up your Amiga with the Workbench disk. To pack on a large number of files, we've compressed them using Stefan Boberg's *LHA* program. Click on the appropriate icon to start a script which will decompress the programs and files to the RAM disk. You can run them from there, or copy them to another disk.

ON THIS MONTH'S DISK...

On this month's subscriber's disk, we have the following fabulous programs and files:

GRAVITY FORCE 2 - A truly marvellous two-player shoot-em-up

PRINTCHEAPER* - Cut down on paper waste by using both sides.

SMILEY - learn the meaning of those strange smileys in messages :-).

CBMDTYPES* - A collection of new datatypes from Commodore.

IMAGINE 3 Patch - Bug fix for the latest version of Imagine.

SNOW - Seasonal(?) Workbench hack.

MAINACTOR - Excellent animation and sound compiler and player.

*Workbench 2 or above only



You can configure more or less everything in *Gravity Force 2*, except your own ability to fly the pesky thing without crashing horribly.

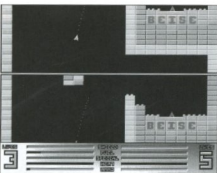
An excellent two-player shoot-em-up, *Gravity Force 2* is one of those games with an extra something that keeps you coming back for more... and more. The basic idea is simple: you and your opponent just have to fly around attempting to shoot each other for no particular reason.

This would be a fairly simple exercise if it wasn't for the presence of gravity, which drags you down in the sort of way that only gravity can. If you hit any of the walls or the floor and you're dead.

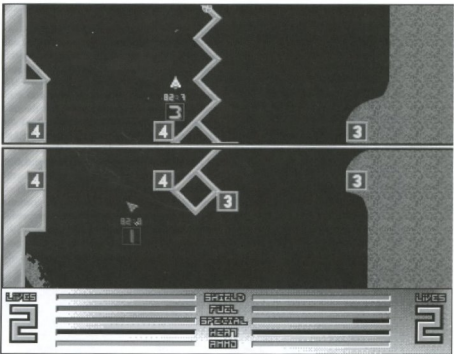
Your ship is equipped with a laser (press the joystick forward to fire) and a thruster (press the fire button) and you also have a special weapon (pull the joystick back) which you can pick from a comprehensive list including such delights as free-fall bombs, guided missiles or triple auto-cannons.

It's a bit difficult at first learning how to control your ship, but you'll soon get the hang of it and be zooming around the screen like a mad thing with laserbolts and bombs flying all over the place.

There are about 40 levels including several race levels where the aim is to get through a series of points in the minimum amount of time. As you'd expect, it's still considered acceptable to shoot the other player in the spirit of friendly competition as long as you smile while you're doing it.



If the *Gravity Force 2* racing tracks aren't to your taste, how about a bit of senseless violence?



It's a race against time in *Gravity Force 2*. Who will be blasted into a ball of radioactive gunk first?

On a less trigger-happy note *MainActor* is an animation player and compiler, but it differs from players such as *PAnim* or *Viewtek* in that you can also add sound to your animation and load or save it as single frames. *MainActor* also has the advantage of being able to read in or save out FLI or FLC files created on lesser computers such as PCs.

The animations can be composed of either anim files produced by programs such as *DPaint* or single images, or you can combine them to form complete animations.

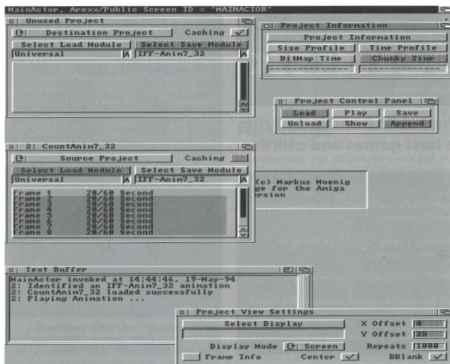
The first thing you need to do to get *MainActor* up and running is to set up an assign which tells the program where it is. If you have put *MainActor* on to your hard disk (called, for instance, *Arthur*) in a directory called *Actor*, you would enter the following line or add it to your startup sequence:

ASSIGN MAINACTOR: ARTHUR:ACTOR

MainActor is far too complex a program to be explained in any great detail here, but fortunately it comes with some excellent documentation, which includes a tutorial to show you how to get started and use your own images and samples.

Those of you who took advantage of our *Imagine* upgrade offer from the Coverdisk of Issue 53 should have received, or should be receiving shortly, your copy of *Imagine 3*.

However, Impulse have already identified a minor bug with the program, which *Imagine 3 Patch* will fix. The bug means that ground objects don't show up properly in reflections when rendered in Trace Mode. It's only a minor glitch, but it could be irritating. Anyway, running the Amiga patch program



MainActor is a powerful and complex animation player that enables you to add sound to your animations.

corrects the program to get around this. To install the patch, copy the file Im3FixAm into your Imagine directory and type Im3FixAm in the Shell.

CBMDybes is a collection of new datatypes, which you can use with the Workbench 3 program *MultiView* to view images in X-Bitmap format (as used on many high-end workstations) and listen to sound files produced on Sun computers.

There is also an enhanced version of the pictures datatype, which has greatly improved colour mapping, which is extremely useful if you are trying to display pictures which are in a different number of colours to the Workbench screen.

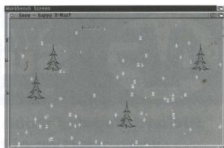
PrintChaper is one of those incredibly simple ideas which makes life easier and in this case also saves you money and paper. The program enables you to print on both sides of a sheet of paper by splitting text files into even and odd pages, so you can print out the odd pages on to one side of the paper and the even pages on the other which can't be bad news for all the worried trees out there.

PrintChaper has to be run from the CLI, and you can add a variety of options to the command line to control how the file is printed. For instance, if you want to print out the even pages of your startup sequence with a header giving the page number, type in the following line:

```

MainActor
A:1. 1. fearful
    2. crying
    3. curly hair
    4. one eyed man
    5. only has a left eye, which is closed
    6. wink
    7. accidentally shaved off one of his eyebrows this morning
    8. unspectified 4-legged critter
    9. heading a hunter
    10. needs a haircut
    11. Australian
    12. Don't like from Tektronix
    13. left-handed
    14. Japanese twins
    15. Siamese twins
    16. wearing bifocals (Jeanette@Brandvax)
    17. secret smile
    18. pepper, like a fighter ("Star Wars")
    19. mooning you
    20. wears glasses
    21. Mr. Bill
    22. glasses, moustache and a beard
    23. wearing a ghost costume
    24. likes to scuba dive
    25. scuba diving
    26. big nose
    27. smiling frowning
    28. I am smiling and I have braces (watch out for the glare!)
    29. said something he shouldn't have
    30. ill
    31. frowning
    32. smiling frowning
    33. big-face
    34. no hair
    35. smiley big-face
    36. surferised
    37. wearing bicycle helmet
    38. kissing
    39. heart broken
    40. blabber mouth
    41. VERY sad
    42. bearded
    43. formally attired
    44. blubber mouth
    45. big noses (5)
    46. thief, hands up!
    47. egghead
    48. broken nose
    49. You're kidding!
    50. fishy
    51. Pacman champion
    52. bobbing
    53. Chinese
    54. scuba smiley big-face
    55. smiling big-face
    56. smiley big-face
    57. a schizophrenic
  
```

If you need to know the meaning of a weird smiley look no further than the informative *Smiley* program.



If you look carefully at Snow, you can see Santa Claus flying across your screen, delivering RAM chips to all the good boys and girls.

PRINTCHAPER S:STARTUP-SEQUENCE EP HD

If you then put the pages back into the paper feeder (but upside down) and change EP to OP, it prints out the odd pages on the reverse side of the paper. For more details, check the document which tells you about more options for controlling *PrintChaper*.

The *Smiley* program is particularly useful if you are interested in any form of electronic mail. If you are, you have probably already come across smileys. These are ways of visually expressing emotions such as joy, sadness or annoyance in text-only messages by adding characters such as :-), :-o or >:-. Turn the page on its side to see what I mean.

Over the years, people have come up with several hundred variations on this theme, including such gems as :#) (mustachioed smiley), +o-) (happy pope) and q:-) (smiley with baseball bat).

This program contains a comprehensive list of smileys, and typing 'smiley' in the Shell provides you with a random one. Alternatively, you can generate a list by typing 'smiley 4'. You can also find out the meaning of a particular smiley you aren't sure about by putting it in an environment variable called 'smile' and typing 'smiley -e'.

The full source code for the *Smiley* program is also included, so it's not a completely frivolous affair. *Smiley* was originally designed for use on Unix platforms, so it's also a good example of how to code in C for different computer platforms.

I know it's not quite seasonal, but I couldn't resist putting this gem on the Subscriber's Superdisk. *Snow* is an excellent screen hack by Markus Illenseer which brings up a window filled with Christmas trees, falling snow and reindeer. The sun may be shining outside, but you can remind yourself of the joys of Christmas with this rather nice program. You can even control the amount of snowflakes on the screen or whether it uses a window or the screen backdrop.

If you have any suggestions, comments or programs that you would like to see on the subscribers' disk, please write to:

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Future Publishing
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Bath
Avon BA1 2BW

Or try the E-Mail addresses:
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AMFORMAT@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK
(Internet, Janet)